

PARENT CUE: THE THRILL OF HOPE

[December 2nd-23rd]

We kicked off a new series this Sunday, called THE THRILL OF HOPE.

Our goal is to come alongside you, in what you're already doing, to help grow your student in their walk with Christ. This Parent Cue is specifically for **you**--to hear what they're hearing on Sunday mornings/evenings, and for you to be as well-equipped as possible to continue the conversations at home. It's divided up into three sections: 1) Be a student of what they're learning, 2) Be a student of your student, 3) Action Point.

1. Be a Student of What They are Learning

For 2,000 years, Christians have gathered all over the world to celebrate the birth of Christ, and not just as a historical event, but as a powerful reminder that God doesn't give up on His promises. And as God's children, we always have hope. The Christmas story began with the nation of Israel, a group of people that had good reason to lose hope--they hadn't heard a word from God in hundreds of years. To the poets, prophets, and priests, it seemed as if God might have turned His back on them. The thrilling nature of the Christmas story is that God didn't turn His back, and although He had been silent, He had not been still. A baby was coming. God was putting skin on and moving into the neighborhood. Hope crashed into the silence.

SESSION ONE: MORE THAN FAITHFUL (December 2nd)

Bottom Line: When God is silent, it doesn't mean he is still.

Scripture References: Luke 1:5-25; Genesis 12:1-3

SESSION TWO: MORE THAN FORGIVEN (December 9th)

Bottom Line: God wants to be more than your forgiver; He wants to be your Father.

Scripture References: Galatians 4:4-7

SESSION THREE: MORE THAN A STORY (December 16th)

Bottom Line: The power of the Christmas story is that it isn't just a story.

Scripture References: Luke 1:1-3, 2

SESSION FOUR: CHRISTMAS PARTY (December 23rd)

2. Be a Student of Your Student

Our kids are desensitized. Maybe that is a sweeping generalization, but let's be honest: how many times have you heard people talk about the selfishness and lack of empathy in the upcoming generation? To be completely fair, this is probably a label that every generation tends to give the one coming up on their heels. But--whether we like it or not--there is a growing body of research which suggests that our young people today are lacking in empathy and sensitivity. Whether because of the media barrage of violence, sexuality, and not-so-real reality television shows, or simply because of a

general lack of education and intergenerational connectivity, more and more people are writing about this next generation's deficit in empathetic abilities.

An article in Psychology Today (June 5th, 2010) puts it this way:

"Earlier this week, Sara Konrath, a research at University of Michigan Institute of Social Research, released her results on a study analyzing and comparing empathy among college students over the last 30 years. The results? The 'biggest drop in empathy' in recent history. She writes, 'College kids today are about 40% lower in empathy than their counterparts of 20 or 30 years ago.' In related survey research, psychologist Jean Twenge has labeled the current generation of young people the 'iGeneration,' or 'Generation Me.' In her books, she describes how young people today 'take for granted that self comes first,' and has labeled this time a 'narcissism epidemic,' stating that we are 'living in an age of entitlement.'" (<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/what-the-wild-things-are/201006/are-today-s-youth-even-more-self-absorbed-and-less-caring-gener>)

These are obviously scary words for those reading and working with raising the next generation. **BUT** we don't have to let research like this have the final word! Our job as parents and leaders is to foster the values of empathy, listening, putting others first, and caring for others we want to see in our kids in the years to come. And a great way to start is to find something that gets your student excited and then channel that excitement into an avenue to serve and help others. Here are some practical questions to ask your student to get thinking about where they might want to give of themselves:

- What really drives you?
- What's the most fun you've ever had helping someone else?
- What dreams do you think God has given you?
- What can you do that most people can't?
- What ability would you most like to develop? Why?
- If God hired you for a summer job, what would you hope it would be? Why?

(Taken from http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/teens/how_your_teen_is_wired.aspx)

3. Action Point

The answers to these questions can be the springboard for helping you and your student determine where they can put their talents and interests to work for others. And remember, just because your student isn't excited by any and every project that comes along doesn't mean they aren't empathetic and it doesn't mean they aren't a great kid! You just may need to dig a bit more and get a bit more creative in figuring out what really ignites them to serve and see outside themselves.

Get connected to a wider community of parents at www.orangeparents.org.

IMPORTANT NEWS & DATES FOR YOU:

1. Multi-Generational Christmas Cookie Day (December 8th) 10:00am-12:30pm, Fellowship Hall
2. Cookie Delivery to Shut-Ins around the community (December 9th), Meet at Chapel Rock @ 4pm
3. ELEVATE (High School Winter Retreat) Deadline: December 17th
To register and/or find out more information, visit <http://chapelrockcc.smartevents.com>.
3. WINTER: THE MIX // Join us on December 30th for some ice skating, hot chocolate, and a winter-Indianapolis adventure. We'll meet at Chapel Rock at 4:30pm!

